



McDougall's Good Stories for Children



How a Learned American Boy Saved a Being of the Mythological Period from Awful Bondage

DO YOU know what a "Hamadryad" is? That is a question which would puzzle many people, and if you look in the dictionary, at page eight hundred and thirteen, you will find the definition as follows: "A wood-nymph fabled to live and die with the tree she inhabited, the oak being considered the tree preferred." This does not explain that she was fastened to the tree in some manner, not being free as was a dryad, another sort of a wood-nymph, but it answers the question.

If the question had been put to Marcus Aurelius Winthrop-Alden he could have answered it at once, for what he did not know about ancient Greek fables was not worth remembering. Albeit, he was only 14 years old. He came of old Massachusetts Puritan stock, and loved to read about his distant ancestors, the brave men who three centuries ago invaded the new Western world, and swapped glass beads at sixpence per gross for valuable real estate with the innocent and bloodthirsty savages.

HAD GREAT ANCESTORS

Among his grandfathers and grandmothers were such names as Faithful, Hardacre, Patience-under-difficulties Williams, Oh-let-us-be-joyful Jackson, Consideration-for-others Jones, Get-there-Eli-Black and many others as odd and striking, but of late the family has adopted more modern names, which are easier to print on a small visiting card. Marcus was so clever that at 15 he expected to enter college, and when I say that he could read Greek and Latin as easily as you or I can read English you can readily conceive what gifts he had, and perhaps forgive him for being somewhat conceited.

He never called a fly by its common name, but referred to it as a "musca domestica"; a mosquito he called "culex"; a bedbug "cimex lectularius," and instead of exclaiming that it was hot he said: "Dear me, how much caloric there is in the atmosphere!" Therefore, as you may easily imagine, he was not beloved by the other boys in that street who used very ordinary, threadbare English.

Marcus had a father who was not so learned as his son, having had to work for a living, but he was a man of inventive genius, who was always pottering over some new device, but Marcus rarely paid any attention to his father's pursuits, so one day, when he was told that they were now suddenly enriched beyond the dreams of Avarice herself, he was surprised to think that a man who could not tell a Greek verb from a cuneiform tablet was able to amass wealth.

WANTED TO VISIT GREECE

Mr. Winthrop-Alden had invented a combination of wheels and cranks, which would automatically turn an ice cream freezer, a coffee mill, grind meat, shell corn, sift ashes, peel potatoes, beat carpets, turn a grindstone, pump water, saw wood and chop fodder, and so instantaneous was its success, so enormous the sales, that every family in the land soon had a Winthrop-Alden self-acting, ball-bearing Automatic Crankocircum, as it was called. Mr. Winthrop-Alden was kept busy putting his money into banks, trust companies, mortgages and the like for months, but finally he had to live a man just to do that alone, and he spent his time traveling abroad. He bought a million-dollar steam yacht to travel in, and he visited many strange out-of-the-way places, but he soon tired of traveling and returned home, where he could get the papers every morning.

One morning Marcus suddenly decided that he ought to visit Greece and see the mystic land of Demosthenes, Socrates and Pericles, the haunt of satyrs, dryads and centaurs, the birthplace of Art, Athletics and Architecture, the home of Sappho and Orpheus, and when Marcus resolved to do a thing it was soon an accomplished fact.

OFF FOR HIS TRIP

He asked his father to lend him the Aphrodite, for that was the name of the yacht, and very appropriately named, for a voyage among the isles of Greece. Mr. Winthrop-Alden readily consented, for he wished Marcus to see the world and learn that it was not entirely managed by Greek and Latin-speaking men. So the yacht was hastily prepared, and soon Marcus was at sea. His first effort was to reform the diction of the orders given by Captain Stunsell to the crew, but while preparing a new set of commands he became very seasick, and gave up the attempt, as well as many other things, and then took to his berth. When he recovered he had forgotten all about the captain's language and was much interested in the daily events on shipboard. When the Aphrodite entered the Mediterranean Sea and steamed rapidly along the shores of Spain, France, Italy and finally Greece, he had, indeed, plenty to think about, for he found that Captain Stunsell and all of the crew firmly believed in harpies, sirens, mermaids, satyrs, vampires, sea serpents, centaurs and, in fact, every fable that the an-



MARCUS SAW THE HAMADRYAD AND TOOK TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF HER

cients used to cherish so fondly, and with which they used to frighten their children at bedtime. It seemed as if the seamen alone had preserved all of the old myths, as well as so many of the ancient words, which are now only used on shipboard, while the rest of the world has passed on and thrown them aside for newer humbugs. At Athens Marcus went ashore and inspected the grand and imposing ruins of the First National Bank of Hellas; the comedy theatre where Aristophanes first uttered the famous joke about the goat eating tomato cans; the Phidias Art Gallery, Parthenon, most wonderful temple on earth; the Erechtheum and a lot of other things, the names of which are simply too hard for me to spell, but the modern Greeks were too much for our little Marcus.

In the first place, he could not understand a word they uttered, and they laughed at him when he spoke the genuine old-time Greek to them. Beside that, they gave him counterfeit money, shortened his change, sold him spurious ancient coins and statuettes, which they said had been dug up in the Acropolis, but which were made in Newark, N. J., by machinery, and they put garlic in his food.

CRUISED 'ROUND HISTORIC PLACES

Captain Stunsell declared them to be "a set of robbing storekeepers, skins and brigands," and decided that he would rather associate with a lot of auctioneers any time. But he was compelled, much against his will, to employ a Greek pilot named Streptococcusopoulous to guide the ship among the many beautiful islands of the archipelago. They called him "Straps" for brevity's sake, and he was a typical modern Greek, wearing a nice white pleated skirt, like a ballet girl's, and with cotton ribbons laced around his legs. He said his forefathers were Spartan kings, but he looked like Solomon Levy.

They soon left Athens and steamed down the coast, crossed over to the Island of Aegina, and then eastward to the myriad islanded sea, where for days they cruised, sailing on sapphire waters along myrtle-covered heights, crowned with gnarled oaks, among the shadows of which gleamed pillars of ivory yellowed to an ivory tint with age, forgotten ruins of temples and palaces, now crumbling into dust in the clinging embrace of the vine and the ivy. That's the way Marcus described them in a letter to his father, and which was published in the evening paper of his town.

THE VESSEL AGROUND

Captain Stunsell noticed almost at once that a long, low, rakish craft followed them, and was frequently visible in the offing, but he presumed she was a sponge fisher's vessel, for the sponge is captured in these waters. It has, however, a pirate ship, filled with desperadoes, gathered together by the Aphrodite's own pilot, waiting for a chance to attack the yacht and carry away the millionaire's son for a heavy ransom. Streptococcusopoulous had not yet seen a fitting opportunity for giving the signal, which was to be a shot from the yacht's

brass gun, but he knew the time would come, and was merely waiting.

One afternoon when they were passing a beautiful island, covered with dense forest, a silent, deserted spot, the yacht suddenly ran aground. The Greek pilot pretended to be much annoyed, and declared that help must be summoned. To this end he ordered the signal gun to be fired, but, to his surprise, some hours elapsed before his desperadoes appeared, for they had also gone aground, and not by accident. While the yacht lay bow on to the shore Marcus decided to land and explore the island with his camera.

PHOTOGRAPHED THE MAIDEN

As the captain knew the place was uninhabited he made no objection, and the Greek pilot thought that his crew could capture the lad more easily in the woods when they arrived. Marcus strolled away through the oak groves, where the bulbul, the halcyon and other strange birds flitted through the gloom and filled the air with melody. All around him, among the gnarled oaks and olive trees, were prostrate marble columns and great stones, showing that once upon a time, long ago, stately buildings had reared their lofty colonnades here, where now all was silence and desert. Suddenly something moving on the gray trunk of an old oak caught his eye, and then he saw a beautiful female form half concealed in the shadow of the leaves. He hastened forward, but at his approach it vanished.

He waited a long time for the form to reappear, but at last, giving up the task, he returned to the yacht. During the evening he told the pilot of what he had seen.

PLANNED HER RELEASE

"That was certainly a Hamadryad!" exclaimed Streptococcusopoulous. "They frequent these lonely islands, but elsewhere in Greece they are supposed to be extinct."

"I never will believe in such things," replied Marcus, angrily. "You tell me fables when I ask for facts!"

"I'm telling it to you straight," said the Greek. "I'm sure it was a Hamadryad!"

"Must 'a' been one of them things or a monkey—" added Captain Stunsell. Marcus reflected that perhaps, after all, the nymphs were not all extinct, and he arranged a plan of action for the morrow. Rising early and taking a large hand mirror he stealthily repaired to the same spot and almost instantly detected the Hamadryad in the tree. She was combing her hair and singing a sweet, but plaintive, song. Before he advanced he took a photograph of her—in fact, he took two—but then as he was changing his plate-holder she saw him and vanished like a squirrel.

Marcus was sure she had slipped into a large crevice and that the tree was hollow, but instead of seeking for her he placed the mirror in the cleft of

two limbs and concealed himself in the laurel bushes below.

After waiting an hour he saw her head emerge, and then as she spied the mirror her shoulders followed as she reached for it. The Hamadryad could not resist the little looking glass, being a woman, and in two minutes she was so absorbed in gazing at the reflection of her lovely face that she forgot everything else, and neither saw nor heard Marcus until he had seized her. She struggled and screamed then, but after a time she listened to his protests and finally became quite passive, convinced that he would not harm her.

"Come down upon the ground and talk to me," said he.

"I cannot. I am fastened to this tree," she replied. "See."

Marcus looked and saw that a long, thin rubber-like band of flesh attached her to the bark of the oak. She added:

"None can release me but the rock-elves. My sisters were all let loose long since and wandered away with the water-nymphs, but I have never been so fortunate. For a thousand years I have sat in this oak and seen the seasons come and go."

WAITING FOR THE ELVES

"Where are these rock-elves?" inquired Marcus. "Down in the earth. Do you see that little opening in those brown rocks? That is the entrance to their subterranean home."

"I'll catch one and compel him to release you," exclaimed Marcus.

"That is impossible," she replied. "No one could capture an elf! They are far too wary!"

"An American can trap anything!" returned Marcus. "I'll bet you I'll have one before night."

"They only come out at night," said the Hamadryad, as she arranged her bang, looking in the mirror coquettishly.

"Well, before morning, then. Just wait."

They conversed all the afternoon, the Hamadryad telling him all she knew about the mysterious denizens of the Grecian forests, relating tales of the past when the island was filled with people, who brought gifts of fruit and flowers to the wood-nymphs, but, she added, they did not bring mirrors.

MADE A CAPTURE

"They'd catch you and put you in a dime museum nowadays," said Marcus, and then he told her of what had happened in the world since she was a baby Hamadryad. When she seemed rather bored by history he began to tell her about department stores, millinery, jewels and corsets, high-heeled shoes and laces, diamonds and silk petticoats, until at last she begged him to think of some way of releasing her, so that she might go with him to the lands where such things were to be seen on the bargain counters. He promised readily, for he had already planned it all. When at last along toward sunset he bade her farewell for a few hours she was

Adventures of Marcus Aurelius Winthrop-Alden on a Voyage to a Supposed Barren Land

so eager that her trembling shook leaves from the tree.

He repaired to Captain Stunsell and told him he must have several dozen sheets of fly-paper at once, and then he related what had happened, after which he developed his photographs before dinner. After the meal was over he took the fly-paper and a bicycle lamp and hurried to the Hamadryad's tree. Here he spread the sticky paper on the ground, close together, immediately before the entrance to the elven headquarters, and climbing into the tree waited for darkness.

Before very long, however, he heard a faint yell and the Hamadryad cried:

"We've got one; oh, goody!"

Marcus sprang down and discovered by the light of his lamp that he had not one, but two elves, firmly caught by hands and feet and yelling like mad. Others were just in the opening, who fled downward instantly.

SAVED THE MAIDEN

Marcus told the frightened elves as he took them up that he would not harm them if they would but release the Hamadryad, and this they quickly consented to do.

So he loosened them from the fly-paper, using some turpentine to remove the terribly sticky stuff from their hands and feet, which is a good thing for you to remember if you happen to sit down on some yourself.

Immediately one of them gathered some tall weeds with white flowers and squeezed the milky juice thereof upon the thong of flesh that bound the beautiful creature to the tree, it almost instantly shrank and shriveled up into nothing at all. She was as free as a bird.

Then Marcus thanked the two elves, who now were quite calm and easy. As they were talking they heard the brigands of Septicoccusopoulous searching the woods, and the elves told Marcus that they were seeking him, for they had overheard the men earlier in the day.

Instantly the Hamadryad hurried the lad into her hollow tree, and just in time to save him.

The Greek brigands sought everywhere, but at last, toward midnight, went away.

Then Marcus, taking the Hamadryad by the hand, crept through the woods until he came to his boat and rowed out to the yacht quickly. He found that she was afloat and that the Greek pilot had gone ashore to look for him.

SHE PINED AWAY

When he told Captain Stunsell about the brigands the captain immediately rang the bell to start the boat, and away they darted, for Marcus thought they might dispense with a pilot who had so many ruffian friends in tow.

They sailed across the Aegean Sea, and day by day steamed farther and farther from the beautiful, lonely Grecian isle, but as the days passed by the lovely Hamadryad became more pensive and mournful. She sat gazing at the sea for hours, and no longer smiled when Marcus told her of the wonders in store. Little by little she grew thinner and paler. Marcus gave her cod liver oil, beef-and-iron and other things to cheer her up, but even these had little effect. He feared that she was gradually pining away and would soon die, but something else happened.

One lovely moonlight night, after she had listened to his graphophone playing rag-time melodies and popular songs, she went below to bed, but at midnight the port dog-watch saw a slim white figure emerge from the cabin and glide to the rail and vanish.

He uttered a frightened shout, which brought the captain and Marcus on deck. All looked astern, and there, fading in the distance, in the moon's brilliant wake, they saw a wonderful spectacle.

OFF WITH THE MERMAIDS

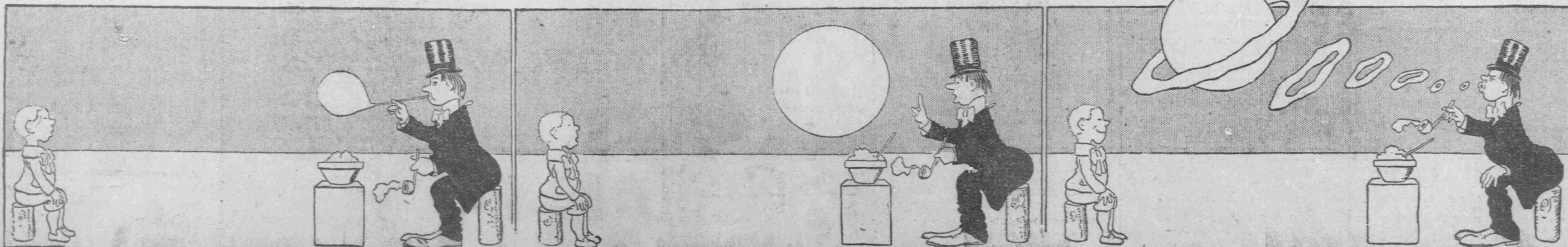
A hundred beautiful mermaids were grouped about the form of the Hamadryad, smiling and caressing her. Her face was turned back toward the yacht, and as they faded into the night she waved her white hand in a gesture of farewell, her face lighted with a wonderfully happy smile; and then came a weird yet joyous burst of song from the mermaid choir and all was dark.

Now Marcus had nothing to show for this remarkable adventure except his two photographs, from which I drew the accompanying pictures. He never saw the lovely Hamadryad again, and I suppose that, like her sisters, she now dwells with the water-nymphs, but Captain Stunsell declared to me that he has seen her down in the water several times, following the Aphrodite, but as the captain often sees things that do not exist, I place little reliance on his statements.

But I'll bet she is sorry sometimes that she didn't try a spell on shore to see the things Marcus told her about and wear a fifty-dollar bonnet just once.

WALT McDOUGALL.

A PRIMARY LESSON IN ASTRONOMY



"Let us take a lesson in astronomy. For instance—"

"This represents the earth floating in space, and—"

"This represents Saturn and his ring."